TIME'S A TELL-TALE:

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

Price 2. 6

H. Bryer, Printer, Bridge-Street, Blackfriars.

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——————Σὺ δὲ μεγαλήτορα θυμὸν,
Ισχειν ἐν ςήθεσσι· φιλοφροσυνη γὰρ ἀμείνων· HOM. IL.

By HENRY SIDDONS.

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1807.

KN

TO THE READER.

DURING a short residence in France, thirteen or fourteen years ago, I amused myself with forming a little serious drama from a story by M. Marmontel, Blandford and Coraly appearing to me two very interesting characters. These scenes lay long neglected in my portfolio.

When I made the stage my profession, I was prompted to review them, but found my hero by far too grave for a Comedy. The part of Benedick was one that I had ever contemplated with delight, and it struck me that a naval character of the description might combine eccentricity with the most exalted generosity.

The play of the Stranger had then rendered the writings of Kotzebue extremely popular; and on perusing his works, I found that he had also made both Shakespear and Marmontel his models:—it occurred to me, that by paraphrasing a few of his speeches, I might give a degree of sprightliness to my principal character, and I felt assured that what I was doing would be new to an *English audience*; the nautical phrases however, which form the allusions and constitute the aggregate, were of my own suggestion.

The father of Coraly in Marmontel is destroyed at the commencement of his story. To heighten the dramatic effect, I embodied him in the character of the elder Hardacre. The genuine applause of tears at the end of the fourth act have convinced me that I was not mistaken. No man of education or liberality has blamed me for making an elegant novel the foundation on

which I have erected the Delmar Family, well knowing that the most excellent writers in the English language, availed themselves of these resources. The busy Morris, the proud Delville, and the dissipated Harrel are calculated for an excellent moral; indeed I have long wondered that the attempt has never been made by abler pens than mine. I am willing to allow that I have availed myself of every advantage which my reading, my reflection, or experience in my profession, may have placed within my reach. I may at least hope that the annexed Comedy is written in the spirit of a man, anxious to serve the cause of truth. I believe this, because it has been criticised with *candour* (a solitary exception cannot change my opinions) and with impartiality. Even those who have censured it, have expressed themselves in the language of gentlemen, and I was never foolish enough to imagine that my production was a perfect one.

Public approbation must ever be the dearest wish of my heart, but I trust that I shall never forget the *respectful deference* by which alone it is to be both obtained and preserved.

To Mr. Graham who accepted my play in the most gentlemanly manner, I return my sincere thanks; also to Mr. Wroughton, who superintended it with a consummate skill, joined to an unremitted attention. All my brother performers exerted the most brilliant talents, with all the zeal of the most unaffected friendship:—this last consideration would have sweetened even the defeat of all my hopes. The song (the four concluding lines excepted), is a translation from Anacreon, ode XL. Theocritus, Idyll XIX. has treated the same subject, but in a measure entirely different.

H. SIDDONS.

PROLOGUE TO TIME'S A TELL-TALE.

(Written by the Author of the Comedy. Spoken by MR. EYRE.)

THAT Time's a Tell-Tale you will all allow,
A truth, each anxious author must avow:
This hour arrived, what fears what doubts destroy
The fabrick of his visionary joy.
Hope's drooping pinions scarcely cleave their way,
The buds of Promise wither and decay,
While all the baseless structures of the mind
Dissolve like dreams—nor leave a wreck behind.
How shall the Prologue then in pleading strain
Implore your suffrage, or your favour gain.
Vain the attempt, of confidence bereft,
At least one manly bold attempt is left;
One never yet in vain to you preferr'd
The charter of our freedom, to be heard;
Then if stern justice can afford no plea
To sooth the rigour of her firm decree,
We are prepared the sentence to admit,
And boast, at least, the courage to submit.
Who shall complain, or murmur when he hears
The honorable fiat of his Peers!
In suppliant verse we ask no critic spare
The sacred task allotted to his care,
But own the critic's office well applied,
A frowning Friend, but an unerring Guide,
Healthful tho' bitter, wholesome tho' severe,
Like winter's frost, most searching when most clear
If then our author aims a feeble blow
To lay the follies and the vices low,
To tear from Fashion's eye the flimsy shroud
That turns domestic sun-shine to a cloud,
To check the errors which thro' social life
Sow the rank seeds of bitterness and strife,
Distract the husband and afflict the wife,
Then should you praise, he'll feel the poet's fire—
Should you condemn—respectfully retire.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Sir Arthur Tessel	- - - -	Messrs. Russell.
Sir David Delmar	- - - -	Raymond.
Blandford	- - - -	Elliston.
Query	- - - - - -	Matthews.
Record	- - - - - -	Palmer.
Hardacre	- - - - - -	Dowton
Young Hardacre	- - - -	Decamp.
Mc Gregor	- - - - -	Maddox.
Toby	- - - - - -	Tokely.

WOMEN.

Lady Delmar	- - - - -	Miss Mellon.
Zelidy	- - - - - -	Mrs. H. Siddons.
Miss Laurel	- - - - -	Mrs. Sparks.
Olivia Wyndham	- - - - -	Miss Duncan.

SCENE—*Surrey.*——TIME—*A Day.*

TIME'S A TELL-TALE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An Inn.*

Enter Mc Gregor, *and* Toby *his Waiter.*

Mc *Gregor.* Hoot Toby Lad—ye maun bustle boot bairn, Sir David's house over the way is quite crammed, some o the company to the—the—aye! the *Fete Champetre*, ye ken will want beds wi us.

Toby. I'll take care measter.

Mc. Greg. Gin we should stand in need o ony thing, only step to neighbour Hardacre, it is but twa miles off ye ken, and I am sure he will obleege us.

Toby. They say in these parts, that Farmer Hardacre be but a cross grained sort of a mon, neither, measter.

Mc. Gregor. Ah he kens the difference o personages, he kens the world! He and I ha baith been weel eeducated—baith come o guede families, but "*tempora mutantur*," times are changed wi me Toby! Mr. Hardacre has been a traveller.

Toby. So they do say. Neighbour Thatch do tell I that he has bought his son measter Phillip a army commission.

Mc. Gregor. And why for *no?*

Toby. Nothing: only the young officers that do

come recruiting here do look so grand and so fine, and it was but the last year I saw measter Phillip, helping his Feyther, to dig their own field.

Mc. Gregor. Why for no bairn? ye ha næ ony *leeterature*, or you would ken that mony an unco muckle general, has digged potatoes on his *ain ground.* [*A knock at the door.*
Gang Toby; gang and speer wha's at the door. [*Exit Toby.*

He returns conducting Captain Blandford and Mr. Query.

Welcome your honors! welcome to the Grey Hound!

Query. A good smart house! Landlord! what county?

Mc. Gregor. Surrey, an like your honour.

Query. Surrey! so it is. Had any rain lately? How far to Sir David Delmar's? got a newspaper in the house? Landlord what's o'clock? are you married?

Mc. Gregor. Deel tak me gin I ken which o'these questions I ought to answer first. [*Aside.*

Query. Why so gloomy Blandford?—got the tooth ache, head ache? can I be useful?

Blandford. Now comes *my* turn, prithee be quiet! Landlord!

Mc. Gregor. Here an like your honor!

Blandford. Send this letter to Sir David Delmar's. directly.

Mc. Gregor. You shall be obey'd, sair. [*Going.*

Query. Stop a moment Mr. Landlord: I want to ask you a question.—Pray have you ever—that is—I mean—couldn't you? never mind—it does not signify—you may go. [*Exit Mc. Gregor.*

Blandford. What a fellow is this! will you never Ned get rid of this cursed habit of asking questions?

Query. Nay! upon my soul you are too severe; what's the harm of a little curiosity? without questions, how would you get at information? would not society stagnate without it? our assemblies be mute, our newspapers insipid? What gives slander the true piquant inuendo? *Question*, for instance—who is the fair lady D., that has lately eloped from the Earl of F., with the gallant Major E.? — question, question, question. A skilful *Query* can save a character, sink a character, recover a character, and after all the questions that are made about questionable circumstances, the only question is, whether there was ever an atom of *foundation* for the circumstance *in question*.

Blandford. Thou art an odd animal Ned! but having brought thee down with me upon an affair in which my honour and my peace are both concerned, I entreat thee to check these wild sallies of that inquisitive disposition.

Query. Peace? Honour concerned? Pray my dear George give me leave to ask are you going to marry that little wild girl, you have brought up so slily in a Welch cottage, and left under the care of Sir David before your last voyage?

Blandford. Have you any reason to think so?

Query. No—not exactly—you have resolved against matrimony you know—but every body has been wondering *who* she is—*what* she is, and *where* she *came from*. A man now that was fond of prying into other people's concerns, would have teazed you to death about all this—you see how indifferent I am about it. Is she pretty? what's her name?

Blandford. Oh yes—that is quite *evident*.

Query. To be sure when a man is about to—when he keeps a pretty girl snug in the country and at last places her under the care of his own

relative—Now come, my dear dear fellow, who is she ?—What is she ?—Any fortune ?—Good family? only answer me this time, and I'll *never, never* teaze you again.

Blandford. On that condition Ned I will own that I *have* something to tell you.

Query. Out with it : nay, hang ceremony, friends like us should have none—your secret ?

Blandford. Is *this*, where the name of a lady is concerned—

Query. Well.

Blandford. Never to allow it to be endangered by ridiculous vanity, or impertinent curiosity: Hang ceremony Ned : friends like *us* should have none you know.

Query. I see : I see you are *laughing* at me, and look ye George ! If ever again I meddle with your concerns—may I——I'll never ask another question as long as I live.

[*Sulkily, his back turned to Blandford.*

Enter Mc Gregor.

Mc Gregor. Ain Mr. Record, Sir David's steward, desires to ken, whether he may speak wi Captain Blandford.

Blandford. My old friend Record ! admit him instantly.

Query. Up, and pray who *is* this Mr. —— mum.

Enter Record.

Record. My ever valued sir !

Blandford. In tears old honesty ! is this the welcome you give to the man you have so often dandled a boy in your arms.

Record. Ah those were happy days, they'll never return! [*Sighs.*

Blandford. Life's a voyage—Keep hope in the perspective—Well what news with the family—I hear my uncle has married during my last voyage. Well, well, its too late to repent now—What sort of a woman is my lady pray?

Query. Aye, honest Mr. Record, pray what sort of a woman is my lady? is she young? rich? good looking? how long has she been married?

Blandford. At it again.

Query. Oh no—no, its no concern of mine—thought you might like to hear—that's all.

Record. Ah sir, my lady is a thorough bred woman of fashion, and the encumbered estate of Sir David was never equal to his ideas of the family dignity, I have told him so a hundred times, *and mark the end on't.*

Blandford. That's a tender subject Record.

Record. I can't help speaking sir when I see all going to wrack and ruin. A gala one night in London, a fete champetre the other, here, in Surrey, and my lady's sister too, Miss Laurel, giving large dinner parties every day to all who *call themselves* the wits and geniuses of the age, a set of hungry gentlemen who eat us out of house and home, and *devour* more good things in a quarter of an hour, than they *write* in a quarter of a year.

Query. But why don't you ask after the young ladies, eh Blandford?

Blandford. Right! my lovely play-fellow Olivia Wyndham, is she with her guardian Hardacre.

Record. No sir, it is Sir David's year. He and old Hardacre are greater enemies than ever. They have never seen or spoken to each other in their lives. Sir David thinks Hardacre wants to secure

Miss Wyndham's fortune by a marriage with his son Phillip, but so far from it, he has sent him to his regiment, that his Honor might not be brought into a moment's question.

Blandford. Well, well! but there is *another* of whom you say nothing; I am sure, my uncle and his lady have both been kind to the poor girl I brought from Wales.

Record. Every body *must* be kind to her. She is so mild, so modest, and so grateful for what you have done.

Blandford. Nonsense! trifles not worth remembering.

Query. I dare say not: pray what *were* they?

Record. I know sir that your uncle would fain unite you to Miss Wyndham—yet when I look at the other poor girl———

Blandford. Why hark ye friend Record, you need not *distress* yourself on that subject. My *ship* is my *wife*, and while I live I am resolved to have *no other*. Marriage! in such times as these a sailor must not *think* on't.

Record. Yet she thinks some return for your goodness—

Blandford. Well, let her return it, by saying nothing about the matter. Sheer compassion was my only motive, I merely did my duty, and if I save a little pinnace from foundering in the ocean of adversity, I am not bound to tow it after me for *life*, am I, honest messmate?

Record. I have done sir. Your uncle is anxiously expecting you at Delmar Hall.

Blandford. I attend. As my friend, you Ned will be sure of a hearty welcome (to Query.) Lead the way old acquaintance. Marriage! psha, put it out of your head man, and when you hear of my being married—but why waste time in

talking of impossibilities, come—(*he is going, Query stops Record.*)

Query. Pray, Mr. Record, who is this Miss Zelidy that——

Blandford (*returns quick*) What makes you loiter?

Query. Nothing; Mr. Record was asking a question, that was all. I follow you.

Blandford. Come then, I know you Ned—nay, you don't quit me. Come, come.

Query. I follow; Pray Mr. Record allow me to ask—no answer! waiter! waiter! what a house, not a waiter to speak to one.—I will have an answer, I am determined. (*looks at his watch*) What's o'clock? past eight! thank ye. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

SIR DAVID DELMAR'S *private Study. He is reading a packet of Letters, in evident perturbation.*

Sir David. Will these torments never end. (*reads*) "Sir the money which has been due since"—psha! "Honoured sir, you were pleased to say I should be paid," "large family," "rent due," (*throws down the letters.*) The life of a galley-slave would be a state of ease to mine, would I could retreat, retrench! retrench! humiliating thought!—I see the upstarts of the day erect their crests, point the finger at the diminished equipage, the lessening retinue—I see my wife reduced to——

Zelidy enters.

Ha! who's there? I'll have no spies upon my conduct, (*angry*).

Zelidy. Oh dear Sir David! you frightened me so! it's only Zelidy.

Sir David. Be not alarmed my pretty charge, come hither: what would you say now, had I something to tell you which would make you happy?

Zelidy. Words are too poor for the expressions of my grateful feelings to you, your lady, and the sweet Miss Wyndham.

Sir David. Nay Zelidy, it is the *duty* of high rank to give protection wheresoever 'tis needed. (*proudly*). Blandford will be here this morning.—(*Gives her a note which she eagerly kisses.*)

Zelidy. My preserver! my guardian angel!—and shall I then at last behold him?

Sir David. (*alarmed at her emotion.*) You express yourself with *warmth.*

Zelidy. Ah! how can I refrain? what other human being has so strong a claim on my affection?

Sir David. Affection! affection Zelidy is a term that——

Zelidy. Forgive, forgive me dear Sir David, I am a wild girl, by nature and by birth. 'Tis now eight years since last I saw the Captain; I was then a prattling girl, yet has his image still been stamped upon my heart. I repose on the little bench beneath his favourite tree, and as the waving boughs of the majestic oak shade me from the scorching sun-beam, I exclaim in grateful fervour, generous! noble-minded Blandford! here is the emblem of thyself and Zelidy! oh! still defend her from the ills of life! still protect the humble flower, torn 'ere it blossomed from the parent branch, and but for *thee* had withered, drooped, and died upon its stem!

Sir David. Poor girl: but I must check this sympathy, or all my schemes are fruitless. (*aside.*) Zelidy *it is my duty to warn you of your danger: a union between Blandford and yourself is made by many circumstances, a thing impossible:* your future peace demands that you should banish these romantic notions from your mind and heart.

Zelidy. I must, I ought, I *will.* To pray for my preserver, to implore of Providence eternal bless-

ings on his head, *that consolation* surely *may* be mine! The sun turns not from the grateful flower that blooms and fades in gazing on his fostering brightness, nor will *Blandford*, placed by fortune, far, far above his lowly Zelidy, *reject* the simple homage of a thankful heart.—The subject affects me sir; some one approaches—permit me to retire. [*She goes out.*

Sir David. Poor artless girl.—But I must steel my heart against these claims. The fortune of my ward Olivia, can alone preserve me from disgrace and ruin: a marriage with my nephew might secure it; but then the cottager—this Hardacre, whom Olivia's father degraded me by making my joint guardian. I see his aims, he means his son Philip! aye, there's the stumbling-block, but I shall *counteract* their plots. Now Mr. Record.

Enter Record.

Record. According to your commands Sir David, I have been to the inn, and your nephew is now arrived; he and his friend are changing their travelling dresses, that they may have the honour of paying their respects to you and to my lady.

Sir David. 'Tis well: Should my present plans succeed, Record, my difficulties will be at an end. A marriage between Blandford and my ward, Miss Wyndham, aided by my sister-in-law's union with Sir Arthur Tessell, will set me above the malice of my fate.—I hope Lady Delmar does not suspect my involvements.

Record. All hitherto is safe; how long it may continue so, Heaven only knows.

Sir David. Only save me till Sir Arthur and my nephew are united to my sister-in-law and Miss Wyndham—you shall see me reform completely.

Record. Such hopes are fruitless, Sir. Captain

Blandford's aversion to matrimony is more rooted than ever: were it otherwise, Hardacre would not give his consent; and as for Sir Arthur Tessel's attachment to your sister-in-law—

Sir David. Can you doubt it? his attentions at Bath—his eagerness to be invited here—

Record. Remember, Sir, that Miss Venusia is neither *young* nor *rich*: your ward is both.—Sir Arthur is what is called a man of leisure. *(sneering.)*

Sir David. What do you mean?

Record. I mean that your *men of leisure* do many things, that would startle a plain, drudging, plodding fellow like myself. The town is full of 'em. It is men of leisure fill the card-table and the gaming-table.—*Leisure* sends the senator to the horse-race, and the peer to the boxing-ring; the daughters of industry are *seduced by men of leisure*, the sons of plain citizens are corrupted by men of leisure, and it is high time for you my master to exert yourself and give a proof, that spite of the prevalence of idleness and fashion, the *commercial* genius of *this Country* shall never be crushed by the vices, follies, and debaucheries of *men of leisure.*

Sir David. Record, you have ever been the friend of my family: your blunt sincerity convinces me you still are mine. The desperate state of my affairs———

Record. Call them not so. Do you and my Lady make a noble effort, all may yet go well. If not, I fear that you will find too late, your substance has been wasted on flatterers and sycophants, whilst you have forfeited the real pride of independency, and put your meanest creditor upon a level with yourself. For *how* Sir David *can* you ever call that man an *inferior*, who can justly accuse you of withholding the hard-earned profit of his industry from his little family,

Sir David. You go too far—you presume on your past services; leave me, Mr. Record. For the *future,* when I *need* your counsel, I shall ask it.

[RECORD *bows and retires.*

Sir David. And am I then truly so lost? are the honours, the dignities of my family really so diminished in my person? I fear they *are.*—Hark! Sir Arthur and my ward Olivia: Record wrongs the Baronet, I cannot, will not doubt his honour.

Enter SIR ARTHUR *and* OLIVIA.

Sir Arthur. Stop, stop, my dear Miss Wyndham, or my Lady Delmar will set me down for the most unpolite, unfashionable fellow in the whole world.

Olivia. My Lady Delmar! what then Sir Arthur, is it modern good breeding to pay all your attentions to the married dames, and leave us poor unfortunate spinsters to pine in seclusion, or sit "like patience on a monument," oh fie!

Sir David. Well urged my dear ward.

Sir Arthur. Why, I can't exactly say, whether it be good breeding or no, but I assure you upon my honour, it's the *way we have in London.* It would there for instance be quite unfashionable to be seen in a *curricle,* with any woman under forty, if she happens to be fifty, so much the better; and if she chances to be *married,* why *so much the better still.*

Olivia. But pray do not the ladies' *husbands* sometimes object to their wives driving in curricles with such *facetious* gentlemen as yourself, Sir Arthur?

Sir Arthur. Oh no! not in London, I assure you. Ask the husband after his lady, he stretches, yawns, and cries, she was very well the day before *yesterday.*—Ask my lady after her husband, she takes

out her visiting pocket-book.—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday! oh yes it *was* Wednesday that I saw him *last!* and on Friday I shall perhaps see him again.—*Bon jour* Colonel, we shall meet at the new play:—and this madam is a sample of matrimonial life in London, led by all fashionable couples from the *Park* and *St. James's* to the sound of *Bow bells.*

Sir David. And pray where have you left my Lady Delmar, and her sister?

Olivia. Oh we left *her* in the beach-grove reading Xenophon's expedition of Cyrus.

Sir Arthur. Oh Sir David you should rouse her energies. She is too much of a recluse, too fond of shady groves and purling streams; they are quite *out of taste*, quite *exploded.* We hurry to our rural retreats to taste the fogs of November, and crowd to the metropolis when the leaves bud, to enjoy the beauties of Pall-Mall, Bond-street, and the two Parks, and to say the truth, I have seen *more beauties* in those few places, than I ever beheld at Vienna, Paris, Petersburgh, Madrid, Naples, Venice, Spa, or Rome.

Sir David. Venusia would be quite vain if she heard you. I fancy *you* are not quite of Sir Arthur's opinion, Miss Wyndham?

Olivia. Why I can not say I *am.* I detest crowds and squeezes of all sorts and kinds.

Sir Arthur. What! not love a route, Miss Olivia.

Olivia. I can't endure it.

Sir David. Why! may one ask?

Olivia. *Perhaps* from passing so much of my time with my rural guardian, Mr. Hardacre: however that may be, I am perpetually at a loss in your crowded assemblies Sir David, and find myself compelled either to say *nothing*, or else talk nonsense.

Sir Arthur. So much the better, so much the better, my dear Miss Wyndham, most of our fashionable conversationes in London, are composed of those who talk nonsense, and nothing *but* nonsense. We take our *degrees* and have our regular professors of the art. We have for instance, the scandalous nonsense, the slip slop nonsense, and the philosophical nonsense.

Sir David. How—the Philosophical Nonsense!

Sir Arthur. Yes, Sir David, nothing can be more simple; the philosophical nonsense merely consists in *doubting* every thing. Trying to comprehend a system we find we cannot account for—the growth of a flower—what *we* don't understand we never admit possible—and so begin again, philosophising and *philosophising* in an agreeable see-saw of continual doubt, and, and metaphysical uncertainty, till we are able at last to dispute the self evident proposition of our own existence, and this is the true "darkness visible" which modern illuminés would wish to spread over our fashionable horizon.

Enter Lady DELMAR.

Sir David. Emily! what has so long detained you?

Lady Delmar. Oh my sister Venusia, with one of her classical illustrations as she calls them. I hope you don't feel offended at—

Sir David. Offended, Emily? what a thought!

Lady Delmar. Sir Arthur, my love, has been proposing a kind of naval fête champêtre in honour of your nephew Captain Blandford's arrival. I have spoken to La Jeunesse, he tells me a few hundreds will do it, all will be prepared, and La Jeunesse will come to you for the money to-morrow.

Sir David. Confusion! I dare not own my embarrassments, and—[*aside*] well, well, my dear!

Lady Delmar. Have we your consent?

Sir Arthur. Oh *I'll* answer for Sir David.

Sir David. I fear you must. [*aside.*]

Sir Arthur. Shall I hope the honour of your ladyship's hand at the ball?

Lady Delmar. Fie, Sir Arthur, what would my sister say?

Sir Arthur. Oh she will never dance I am sure, Miss Wyndham will perhaps favour me?

Olivia. Oh by all means, Sir Arthur, we have a plentiful lack of young men in this part of the world, and as they are equally inanimate automatons, mere wire moved puppets—*one* may do just as well as *another* for a country dance; and for *this reason*—I have no objection to go down one with you—allons Sir Arthur. [*Exit* OLIVIA *and* SIR ARTHUR, *with* OLIVIA, *singing*,]

Follow me and I will show,
Where the rocks of coral grow.

Lady Delmar. Shall we follow?

Sir David. Shall I avow my situation, explain my difficulties—pride—pride and shame constrain my tongue. [*aside.*

Lady Delmar. Oh a-propos my dear. La Jeunesse tells me, we must cut down the hawthorn, as it will impede the preparation for the fête.

Sir David. I must not, will not have that tree molested, it was planted, when my father lived, by my poor sister.

Lady Delmar. Sister—*have* you a sister then?

Sir David. I had—I had—but unhappy girl

Lady Delmar. And never mentioned her to *me?*

Sir David. I wished to banish her my memory for ever. She married a man every way beneath

her rank—we abandoned, gave her up—she fled the country, and I fear—

Enter WILLIAMS.

Williams. Captain Blandford's respects and he is now ready to wait on you, Sir.

Sir David. I come. [*bows, exit.*] Oh Lady Delmar! amidst all the gaiety with which you have long beheld me surrounded, I have been a prey to feelings which—

Lady Delmar. Pray droop not thus my love, few in this world are free from such upbraidings.— If we could judge ourselves with half the rigour we exert towards others, the self accusing blush would mantle o'er the cheek of many a rugged moralist, and the angel of pity dropping a tear upon the catalogue of human failings would avow, none are themselves so pure, as to deny indulgence to the errors of a fellow creature. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE. SIR DAVID'S *Study.* [*as before*] (*Enter* BLANDFORD *dressed in full uniform, with* WILLIAMS.)

WILLIAMS.

MY master will be here directly, sir.

Blandford. Nay, let him not hurry: I can anchor here awhile, by the way, now my friend is adorning his person, you may inform me how my little Zelidy goes on—she must be much taller than when I left her last.

Williams. Aye sir, and she is good as she is beautiful, and beautiful as good—the whole family doat upon her.

Blandford. I rejoice to hear it, you have a great deal of company I see.

Williams. Our house is *never* empty sir—my master—but I hear him coming.

SIR DAVID *enters,* WILLIAMS *bows, retires.*

Sir David. Dear Blandford.

Blandford. After all my perils, kind sir, trust me, I truly rejoice to find myself safe in your hospitable port once more; but you seem a little weather beaten: no rough gales I hope, since you ventured on the dangerous voyage of matrimony?

Sir David. None George, none; and do *you* my young son of Neptune, still hold your resolution against the happy state.

Blandford. Fixed Sir David. Constant, as the *needle to the pole.* I've made many a false tack in

my life it must be confessed; but matrimony!—of *that* quicksand, thank Heaven, I have contrived to steer clear.

Sir David. Nay, be serious. I have urgent reasons for wishing you to be so.

Blandford. Well then I am—I am serious, and ask me any questions you think proper, I will answer them with all the plain blunt sincerity, that belongs to my profession.

[*Sir David here assumes an air of the most serious earnestness.*]

Sir David. You promise me to be direct in your answer.

Blandford. *Try* me.

Sir David. What then, George, can be a *wiser plan*, for a fellow at your time of life, than to marry?

Blandford. To *shoot* himself.

Sir David. I fear all my hopes are vain. [*aside.*]

Blandford. Look ye, Sir David—Matrimony is your harbour, and I give you joy of it; for my own part I have told you often, and I tell you again and again, its a voyage I have no mind to—at four and thirty years of age, I have four and thirty little whims—and customs—and custom is a second nature. For instance I have a favourite walk, a favourite book, a favourite chair—in comes a wife—and East, West, North, and South, cannot blow from more different quarters than our inclinations. I am inured to hardship, she pines for delicacies; I love walking, she must have a carriage to loll in; madam dies for the opera, I had rather see a dancing bear than a dancing coxcomb; she loves foreign music, I am for a sailor's artless ballad; she has the head-ache—grows nervous—enter doctors, apothecaries, salts, phials, cordials and restoratives, fits, faintings and histerics,—and so you have the whole log-book of *the cruize of matrimony*.

Sir David. Were we born to please ourselves

alone, such maxims might be encouraged; but in all families where the pride of ancestry is to be supported—sacrifices *must be made*. Since you saw her last Miss Wyndham is improved in every virtue, and in every grace. [*earnestly.*]

Blandford. I truly rejoice to hear it, she has been good to my poor Zelidy whom I left under her care and yours. [SIR DAVID *is here abstracted.*]

Sir David. It is natural that her thoughts should now be directed to a change of situation. Her Fortune is IMMENSE George! I have loved you from infancy. If—I say, *if* you saw me surrounded by perils, encumbered by difficulties, would—would you not do *somewhat* to relieve me?

Blandford. The question hurts me. My element is a rough one I own, but I never saw the *sinking enemy* to whom I would not stretch a helping hand; the *friend* who doubts me then, affronts my feelings as a *man*, a sailor, and a christian.

Sir David. My noble boy! this day will I entrust you with a secret which must place my happiness; and what is dearer far than happiness—my *honour*, in your keeping—meantime regard Miss Wyndham as a lady dear to the interests of your family.

Blandford. If you desire it, she shall find a brother in me.

Sir David. A brother!—and why—why not a—husband? [*With great vehemence.*]

Blandford. A husband. [*Recoiling.*]

Sir David. Blandford, my only hope remains with you. No more at present, my Lady Delmar waits impatient to congratulate your return, with her you will find Miss Wyndham.

Blandford. I attend her ladyship.

Sir David. Williams.——[*Enter* WILLIAMS.]——Conduct the Captain to her Ladyship.—[*Exit* WILLIAMS.]—And when you see Olivia, think George,

think what I have said, I have cause to imagine the poor girl loves you, and you are bound in honour——

Blandford. Not to deceive her. No uncle, no! The scoundrel that beneath *false colours* captures a weaker vessel than his own, is a robber and a pirate, a villain, and a coward. What should I be if, professing to love *no* woman, I cheated *any*, with a hand without a heart.

Sir David. Hear me George——

Blandford. No uncle, try me any way but this. If I wrong a man he calls me to account, and none but a dastard will wound that sex, who have our own sensibilities to feel an injury *though they may not have* the same *strength* to resent it—you will feel my argument, and I trust the decision to your own bosom. [*Exit* BLANDFORD.

Sir David. And that decision must condemn me. Blandford refuses then, and on Sir Arthur *all* my hope must rest. He has written to the Colonel of young Hardacre—and in such terms that if all my *projects* are not formed to be defeated, he is no longer with his regiment. Have I then added tyranny—oppression—to my failings? but where can that man hope to stop, who once has listened to the dictates of an *unfeeling* prodigality? [*Exit.*

The Cottage of HARDACRE, *neat and plain,* RECORD *reading,* HARDACRE *at a Table smoaking his Pipe.*

Hardacre. Well, Record, have you finished the letter from my boy Philip?

Record. He here informs you that having quarrelled with his Colonel, he has left his regiment.

Hardacre. Right. [*Smokes.*]

Record. He is afraid that some concealed enemy has done him this ill turn.

Hardacre. Yes. [*Coolly.*]

Record. And that scanty as he knows your means

to be, he is now returning to share them, assured that you would never again admit him to your presence if he stooped to an act of servility.

Hardacre. Right! right! *quite right!*

Record. And all these ill tidings you hear with the most complete unconcern?

Hardacre. Why should it *concern* me?

Record. Philip has been bred like a gentleman.

Hardacre. Granted.

Record. How is he to support himself now?

Hardacre. Why, like a gentleman.

Record. But *how?*

Hardacre. By Independence.

Record. What Independence?

Hardacre. The best—*his own exertions.*

Record. We are *Friends!*

Hardacre. True.

Record. I suspect foul play has been used.

Hardacre. Um!

Record. Sir David likes you not.

Hardacre. May be so! 'Tis strange to hate a man one never saw.

Record. He is proud.

Hardacre. So am I.

Record. Miss Wyndham's father left you joint guardian with him.

Hardacre. He did.

Record. This hurt his dignity. The will which I have before me, ordains that she should pass the summer with you at your cottage, and the winter with Sir David at his house in town.

Hardacre. He had his reasons. Wyndham was an odd fellow like myself. I knew him from early life.

Record. Indeed!

Hardacre. Poor as I seem, I *did;* and rendered him a service he has not forgotten:—you ever *thought* mean oddity—I *am* so.

Record. Colonel Wyndham was rich—If you *served* him, how comes it that he left you none of his wealth?

Hardacre. I am an *oddity* I tell you, he *knew* I *was* so; he knew likewise that the services the heart renders, the *heart* and not the *hand* must repay—money can buy many things — but the *friend* that *money* can buy is hardly worth the purchasing.

Record. I comprehend:—Colonel Wyndham wished his daughter to pass her time equally between the town and country—because—

Hardacre. Both have their vices—you have hit it; and by seeing them, she might avoid their *extremes.*

Record. Sir David *suspects* that you intend your son for Miss Wyndham's husband.

Hardacre. *Does* he?

Record. I know he does—if you could convince him of your innocence—he would be your friend.

Hardacre. My *what?* [*Laying down his pipe and rising with a cool ddain.*]

Record. Your friend.

Hardacre. And what right can Sir David Delmar have to the name of old Philip Hardacre's friend? a name *he* never wastes on every new comer, who can scrape a tune on a fiddle, or make a leg like a dancing master—not carelessly given, or wantonly withdrawn—but once pledged with the rough grasp of an honest hand, held firm and fast, till the last struggle of expiring mortality.

Record. How.

Hardacre. For *you* Mr. Record is my attachment firm and real—but your master must deserve my *esteem* before he can gain my *friendship.*

Record. Recollect Sir David's interest in the country.

Hardacre. I hope he does his best to serve it, and while life and strength is left me, *so will* I. In peace I will serve it by my example to my poorer neighbours round me, and in war I will unite my arms to theirs against invading violence. I am Sir David's equal here—I want not his *favors.* I am loved by those round me—smoke a pipe with the curate—club a joke with the apothecary—talk of pronouns and participles with the school-master—and condemn smuggling with the exciseman—every face in the village meets me with a smile—I *want not his friendship.*

Enter PHILIP.

Hardacre. My boy!

Philip. Dear, dear father! Mr. Record!

Record. Welcome home, young gentleman.

Philip. Home would indeed be welcome to me, sir—Did I not come to overcharge a father—You received my letter?

Record. Yes, and your father approves.

Philip. Then am I blest. I know not wherefore I have been thus treated: long was I honoured with my commander's confidence, and proud to hold, endeavoured to preserve it.

Record. His temper perhaps was overbearing.

Philip. Let me do justice to his character; as a soldier, he is an honour to his country and profession; as a man, he is an ornament to the society of which he is a member, He has an eye to discern merit, and under him the meanest private in his ranks has only to *deserve*, to *find* protection, friendship and promotion.

Hardacre. You have been *slandered*, boy:

Philip. Alas! I fear so father.

Hardacre. You've not been treated with indignity.

Philip. I stand before my father; that is at once an *answer* to your question; had I endured the slightest insult, I would have fled to the earth's extremest verge ere I ventured to a roof where *poverty* has dwelt, but where *disgrace* has never dared to enter.

Hardacre. Your hand—your hand—excuse the old man, Record—tears are not constant visitors with me, and when they *come*, I welcome them as strangers and as guests.

Philip. No, father, no—my resignation sprung from chilling apathies, from cold neglects, *felt* easier than *described.* They pierced my heart, used to the glow of social friendship; and finding it withdrawn, I come again to my parental roof; my former occupation. Convinced, that though no laurel graces my brow, as I return with an unsullied heart, a father's arms will be—as now I *see they are,* open to welcome, chear and bless me. [*Embrace.*

Record. Your hand—Hardacre, you *called* me *friend.* I'll prove so.—I suspect treachery—I'll find it.

Hardacre. Will you?

Record. To be sure I will. I had as soon give in a false account, as not do justice to my neighbour's character—your's young man! [*Shake's Philip's hand heartily and Exit.*

Hardacre. And now, my boy, you must turn the sword to the sickle. Stop: *one word*—it is suspected that Miss Wyndham—you turn pale—to-morrow she sets out to London, I shall resign my guardianship, and you must—aye *must* promise me, never to see her more.

Philip. If it is your pleasure. [*faltering.*

Hardacre. It's my command—Sir David thinks I have *encouraged* you—Did the proud man know—Well, no matter—Rouse yourself; if you indulge a *hope*, remember that you wrong Olivia—Your fa-

ther and—my boy I know the task is hard—I feel—I feel for you. [*Tend rly*

Philip. Yes, sir, I will exert myself, and strive to find in labour and activity an antidote to a passion, weakly, vainly cherished.

Hardacre. Why, that's well said, we'll toil again together, and affluence shall envy us our occupation; my little lands have been neglected in thy absence; they now again shall smile and flourish—we'll—we'll help the poorer cottagers about us—divide our crust with the needy,—administer to the *afflicted—divide* the burthen with the weary, and make the grateful hamlet bless, and laugh around us.

[*Exeunt affectionately.*

SCENE III.

SIR DAVID DELMAR'S *House.*

The general Apartment.

ZELIDY—*Drawing at a Table.*

He has forgotten me; I know, I feel he has—He has been with Lady Delmar and Olivia; yet he asks not for me? I have finished my picture—Will it please him? Here is a little vessel agitated by a storm; that will serve as an emblem of poor Zelidy—Here a majestic bark hastening to its relief; that is an emblem of Blandford—And here is Hope smiling upon her anchor; ah for whom will that serve? *Not* for Zelidy!

Enter BLANDFORD.

Blandford. What a confounded noise in every part of this mansion! This it is to be married.—Marriage!—quiet? pretty quiet state, forsooth! there must be great *happiness* to be sure when all these noises of routs, and balls, and fete champetres

are necessary to keep the heavy machine in motion; thank heaven and thy stars, Blandford, *thou* art teazed with no *piping* but the piping of the storm; subject to no caprices but the caprices of the elements—Matrimony!—Love!—Away with 'em!—I'll none on't!

Zelidy. [*Starting up.*] Tis he! that voice! my grateful heart cannot delude—deceive me; oh my guardian! my preserver! [*bursts into tears and kneels before him.*

Blandford. Zelidy! why, yes—yes, it must; well, if it be so, I'm heartily glad to see [*kisses her*] I feel an odd sensation that—*marriage!* why the plague should people *marry!*

Zelidy. My benefactor! my father!

Blandford. Nay, nay, you need not call me father, Sir David is much older than I am, and you may call *him* father if you please.

Zelidy. Your goodness.—

Blandford. Well, never mind my goodness now, you haven't wanted any thing in my absence I hope—come, don't call me father *again—I don't like it.*

Zelidy. Brother, then.

Blandford. Yes, that's a little better, and more like the fact. Well, you have been in London—like it I suppose—dress, equipage, jewels—eh?

Zelidy. Ah, no! ill would it become an *orphan*, from childhood a dependant on the generous bounties of another, to vie in splendour with the affluent, the prosperous, and the happy!

Blandford I understand—but take one truth from him who *never flattered* in his life. The simple pinnace floating down life's tide, with the white pendant of truth and innocence, need never strike its modest flag to any painted gaudy vessel, that, decked in gew-gaw colours, rides in affected

arrogance before it. Here, here is some worthless ballast of which it will be kind to lighten me.

[*offers money.*

Zelidy. Ah no! no! no! you hurt, you distress me. I have hitherto received your bounties in silence and without a blush—should they assume a pecuniary form, I could no longer accept them, with other sensations than those of sorrow and uneasiness.

Blandford. Rather than so, may every guinea I possess be buried in the ocean where I earned it. I now find that to *give* is in the power of every stupid fellow—to give *properly* is a science—and we sailors generally understand the *liberal* arts much better than the *fine* ones.

Zelidy. Ah, sir! you have already done too much for Zelidy. My wishes should be humble as my fortunes; my parents are perhaps in poverty, in want.

Blandford. Be satisfied, my dear Zelidy, your parents can now need no assistance from you—your father was—

Zelidy. Was—who—speak—oh speak, and I will bless you—oh, yes! doubly bless you. When last we saw you here, I was a child too young to be entrusted with my own sad story—but, when reflection dawned, my busy fancy drew the mournful picture of my parents sufferings. Memory retraced the image of my father, my mother's person too I never can forget—pale was her cheek, and she would sit and weep—Oh, hear me, bounteous Heaven! thou who didst spread thy sheltering arm in infancy! if yet my parents *live*—oh guide me, guide me to them! these hands shall toil to aid, these active limbs shall bound with more than youthful vigour to repay the pious debt of gratitude, of feeling, and of nature!

Blandford. Rise, Zelidy—your supplications are no longer to be resisted. *Listen* to me:

Zelidy. Oh, I am all attention.

Blandford. The ship, which, in the absence of our Captain, I fourteen years since commanded, was ordered on an expedition to the place of your nativity. One night, when all was dark, and silent, except the sullen wave, which dashed against the vessel's side—I heard——

Enter QUERY, *curiously coming towards him.*

Query. Aye, my dear fellow, *what* did you hear?

Blandford. Provoking!

Zelidy. Cruel interruption!

Query. Beg pardon, fear I come a little *mal-a-propos.*

Blandford. Where the deuce have you been loitering?

Query. *Couldn't* be introduced *en deshabille*, Miss.

Zelidy. Sir.

Query. Madam; is it Miss Zelidy? [*aside to Blandford.*

Blandford. No, no.

Query. Miss Venusia?

Blandford. O no!—no, I tell you.

Query. Miss Olivia?

Blandford. No.

Query. Lady Delmar, mayhap? [BLANDFORD *makes a sign to* ZELIDY, *who retires unseen by* QUERY.

Blandford. Why you seem to know the *names* of the whole family before you have set eyes upon one of them.

Query. Let me alone for that—hate to lose time; while my coiffeur equipped me, got it *all* out of him. Don't let me neglect the young lady, though:

pray, Miss, give me leave to ask. [*turns round*] Hey, gone! what could drive her away?

Blandford. Your questions would drive away the very devil himself.

Query Come, come—now do; do be good natured, and I won't plague you any more: never ask a single question till supper time. I say, who do you think is down on a visit here.

Blandford. I know not, I care not.

Query. My old London acquaintance, Sir Arthur Tessel—on a love affair to one of the ladies of this mansion; don't know which—ask him though the first time I see him, since *you wish it.*

Blandford. Why should I wish it? *I've* nothing to do with *love* or *marriage.*

Query. You remember Sir Arthur's uncle, the Colonel—I've heard you speak of him. Could you *introduce* me to him; he's a brave fellow they say.

Blandford. They do him justice then; I *know* him to be so.

Query. Ask Sir Arthur to introduce me. The Colonel will thank him: know I shall be a *favourite*—flatter myself *few people* more so in London. Always do my best to please the good folks there; I've one certain way of being *agreeable*—have you found it out?

Blandford. Upon my soul, *I have not.*

Query. No? tell you my secret then; always make myself *useful.* Any thing *lost,* I enquire—any reports going abroad; I enquire—any news stirring; I enquire—thus by little and little, I gather like a snow-ball; every body is glad to employ me, every body is glad to see me, and useful Ned Query can make his way into a drawing room, nine times out of ten, when a poor poet, a celebrated general, or a man of family is told, not at home, for four and *twenty times together.*

Blandford. Indeed, then I'm heartily glad, Ned, that it has been my good fortune to spend so much of my time at sea.

Query. Why so?

Blandford. Because, I should be sorry to see noise and impudence admitted to any house where genius, worth and virtue, were kept waiting at the door; but follow me to the ladies, and mind you are upon your good behaviour.

Query. But pray, did you ever——

Blandford. Psha— [*Exit.*

Query. Here's treatment; I'll never ask another question as long as I live—never, never, never! [*Servant passes the stage.*] Ah, John, how's your wife?—Dumb—plague take it, people now a days would rather talk of any body's wives than their *own.* [*Exit.*

SCENE—*the Fete Champetre.*

A grand Naval Trophy erected in the middle of the Stage; various Arbours filled with elegant Company, SIR DAVID *and his Party;* SIR ARTHUR *and* OLIVIA *come forward.*

Sir Arthur. Positively, Miss Wyndham, you *must* preside at this fete champetre; I cannot prevail on your aunt Venusia to do the honours, because she says a fete champetre, was a thing unknown to the ancient dames of Greece and Rome. Ha! ha! ha!

Olivia. Yet, Sir Arthur, you can flatter the woman you laugh at; and pray give me leave to ask your motives for a constant attendance on her you are perpetually endeavouring to render ridiculous.

Sir Arthur. Can my motives be unknown to Miss Wyndham? for whom I have deserted dear, dear London, and all its charming ways?—ah, Miss Wyndham, Miss Wyndham! will you never understand me?

Olivia. Oh yes, Sir Arthur, I understand you too well; I see that your pretended regards to my aunt are so many affronts in disguise.

Sir Arthur. Oh no! no affront, I do quiz her a little to be sure, its a way we have in London.

Olivia. I know it, worthy Baronet, I know it. Quiz is an elegant term, which supplies, in your vain ideas, those superior qualifications you only ridicule because you cannot imitate.

Sir Arthur. Hold! hold! my dear Miss Wyndham, if you put on the armour of Minerva, I shall never venture to attack you.

Olivia. Nay, be not afraid Sir Arthur, a choice spirit like yourself should never be alarmed at any thing; I have observed your whole fraternity in London, have waited hours in patient expectation of their lively sallies, and found them languid when not noisy, saying any thing for the mere purpose of saying any thing, and eager to gain the applauses of coxcombs, empty as themselves, though on such terms as would cover an honest man with confusion, or a delicate woman with blushes.—Oh fie! fie! Sir Arthur!

(*Goes up the stage—Music.*)

Sir Arthur. 'Tis plain, she suspects my designs: can I then give her up with such grace, such vivacity, and such fortune? forbid it Love! Is there any harm in making this antiquated spinster the means of obtaining snch a treasure? none. She watches me closely though.—Let me see, how to get rid of her? I have it, the obsequious Mr. Query will stand in good stead. I will introduce him as a scholar and a wit, the good old lady will swallow the bait, he will engross some of her attentions, and thus I hope to make him *useful* every way. (QUERY *comes forward*).

Query. Who useful, my dear Sir Arthur? only make *me* so, I shall be the happiest fellow in the world.

Sir Arthur. You might now be of the greatest service to me.

Query. As how? you rejoice my heart! as how?

Sir Arthur. Come to our table, I'll tell you my scheme.

Query. Scheme! what scheme? heard Lady Delmar ask for you—darted off like an arrow from a bow—are you a toxopholite?—

Sir Arthur. Psha! we are staid for. [*Retire.*

Enter RECORD.

Record. Here is the temple of dissipation.

Sir David. Now Record, what news?

Record. The old news, sir, the old visitors.

Sir David. 'Sdeath, have they presumed to venture *here?*

Record. Yes sir, and threaten to expose you before all your company, unless——

Sir David. Hush! how much will satisfy their clamours?

Record. Not less than 500l.

Sir David. Confusion! I borrowed that sum of Miss Wyndham yesterday, for a debt of honour; I must again apply to her: for the present take this (*gives a bank-note,*) silence the harpies.—I would not have Lady Delmar know it for a thousand worlds.

Record. And how is Miss Wyndham to be—

Sir David. No matter; do your duty, sir: leave me to——I cannot think——leave me, leave me to——to-morrow all shall be set to rights. (*retires and joins his party.*)

Record. My *duty!* yes, painful as that duty is, it must, it shall be done. Miss Wyndham must not

fall a sacrifice to her own goodness. On this note, which I have been requested by Philip to deliver to her, I may pencil a few lines to warn her of her danger. Ha! they rise.

Sir David and Lady come forward; Sir Arthur and Query converse; Blandford and Zelidy engaged likewise in conversation: while all are occupied, Record secretly slips a letter into the hand of Olivia.

Lady Delmar. My dear, you are thoughtful?

Sir David. Oh no! I was absorbed in—no matter—are the dancers ready?

Query. Oh! yes, all ready. I have seen to that, Sir David.

Sir David. Let them commence.

Lady Delmar. My dear!

Sir David. Pray see to our friends, I, I will follow.—I like not the attentions of my nephew to this orphan girl, pity they say is a kin to love: this must be looked to, and——

The music here strikes up. Village girls dance, and present Blandford with flowers, then return with naval flags, laurels, &c. which they likewise lay at his feet.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—Sir David's *House.*

Enter Sir Arthur, *musing.*

Sir Arthur.

SURELY, surely of all plagues with which a man can be tormented, none was ever greater than being trusted with the secrets of a family. Sir David tells me, that spite of the brilliant figure he has so long been making, he is worried to death by the demands of creditors.—Strange! psha! not at all so, the thing is *common* enough in every circle in London, and were none *there* to ride in their own carriages but those who have paid for them, we might lounge down *Bond-street* with as much ease and as little difficulty, as we stroll through a church-yard in a country-village.

Enter Record *with a bundle of bills.*

Record. Sir David informs me sir, that you have kindly undertaken to settle with a few gentlemen who are to call here for money this morning.

Sir Arthur. Oh! yes, yes; Sir David tells me these people have been very troublesome, and as I am so soon to have the honor of being nearly related to him, its my duty to do all I can to set his mind at rest: send them to me, I'll *settle* them.

Record. If you would encharge me with the money sir, it would save you much trouble.

Sir Arthur. Money! oh! never mind the money

my dear fellow, with us men of fashion money is *neither here nor there.* When they call, only let me know, and FLATTERY's the word. You shall hear me praise the colouring of the painter, till instead of payment, he begs me to sit for the exhibition; and tickle the wine-merchant over a bottle of his *own Champagne*, till he forgets what he came for, and begs a *fresh order*, with a bow down to the ground. This is the London style of living, my old boy, and without it, we have a number of very dashing fellows who would not *know how to live at all.*

Record. I am astonished!

Sir Arthur. Are you? that's a sign you know very little of high life then; any stupid fellow can manage these matters *with* money, the real art of the business is to settle them without it, only send them to *me*, and you shall see me put my *theory* in practice. [*Exit* RECORD.

Sir Arthur. So! when I have accommodated matters with these gentry, I have promised Sir David to call this young Hardacre to an account.—My letter to the Colonel has taken effect it seems, I hope he did not suspect the writer. Oh! (*taking out a memorandum book*) here is my young spark's address; I was to drive Miss Wyndham in my curricle to-day, and with all this business on my hands, how shall I contrive to——

Enter QUERY.

Query. My dear Sir Arthur, can I drive the curricle for you? I am a dead good whip.

Sir Arthur. Are you?

Query. *Am* I! d'ye know Bob Squarewell? he taught me the rules, snug, short, concise—

The rule of the road is a paradox quite,
While driving your carriage along,
If you keep to the *left*, you are sure to go *right*,
And if you go *right*, you go *wrong*.

Sir Arthur. Well! that will answer, go and prepare.

Query. I am gone; but stay—Sir Arthur where do you live in London? you keep a great deal of company?

Sir Arthur. Well, what then?

Query. Ah! if you would but introduce me to some of your parties. I'm a *useful fellow*, will you? its of no great consequence, only it gives a man an air, to have a large acquaintance: will you introduce me some morning to all your fashionable friends?

Sir Arthur. Any thing, zounds! you'll keep Miss Wyndham waiting.

Query. I am gone, only give me leave to ask one question, do you know the marquis of——

Sir Arthur. 'Sdeath and plagues, ask me any thing when you *come back*; only go now. (*retires up*.)

Query. I'm gone, noble baronet, I'm gone.

[*Exit* QUERY.

Sir Arthur. Now then for my defiance, my heart upbraids me when I think: think, beware of that Sir Arthur Tessel.—Reflection is the very *worst* friend a *duellist* can cherish.

[*During his soliloquy, Olivia appears advancing through the folding-doors, so earnestly employed in reading a letter, that she does not observe his exit.*]

But see, my charming Olivia comes this way, I will instantly dispatch the business of Sir David, and return to her immediately. [*Exit* SIR ARTHUR.

Olivia. Generous Philip! this noble effort for your father adds esteem to pity: pity! beware

Olivia—*Pity* is a dangerous word—Heigho! (*looks at the letter*) what have we here, lines on the back in pencil writing. "Beware Miss Wyndham," "beware of the immense sums Sir David is daily borrowing."—This *hint* confirms my former suspicions—ha Miss Venusia.

Seeing Miss Venusia Laurel advancing slowly down the stage, with a book in her hand, her air pensive, solemn, and absorbed.

Miss Venusia. These pleasures Melancholy give,
And I with thee will choose to live.

Miss Wyndham! jaded to death with that foolish feminine amusement, dancing, I suppose—Cornelia never danced—a mere loco motive exercise! I marvel my sister Lady Delmar has not more taste than to encourage it.

Olivia. It is a *harmless* diversion, at least my dear Madam, promotes society, and brings young people together.

Miss Venusia. Fie, fie, Miss Olivia! You have caught up these notions in the mansion of that visigoth, that Hardacre.

Olivia. Would you then have a young woman totally lay aside the graces that characterise her own sex?

Miss Venusia. The graces—ridiculous! No Miss Olivia, no. Even when a child, I was admired for the gravity of my looks.

Olivia. Indeed Madam.

Miss Venusia. Aye indeed; as I grew to riper years, I never consulted the idle variations of fashion; for the last twenty years, I have dressed with the same pure simplicity in which you see me now—ever keeping in my mind, the favourite line of my favourite poet—

"Where half the skill is decently to hide."

A cautious maxim, that has been out of date for these six years past.

Olivia. And yet my dear Madam, I have observed that there is nothing in this *world* of which the men have so great an horror as a *learned* lady.

Miss Venusia. Mere ignorance child! Sheer envy, and malevolence!

Olivia. A mistake, a mistake—I can assure you; no miser grudges his neighbour a supernumerary shilling with more grumbling reluctance, than a husband envies a wife, one single atom of superior intellect.

Miss Venusia. However it may be in the country, amongst ignorant rustics like old Hardacre—it is quite a different case in London I assure you Miss. For I think you yourself will agree with me in a firm opinion, that in LONDON, a woman of *genius* and *talent* never *yet* went *unnoticed* or *unrewarded*.

Olivia. You are as partial to London as your admirer Sir Arthur, who will not allow the least shadow of merit to any thing, that does not bear the stamp of the metropolis.

Miss Venusia. Sir Arthur is a man of sense, a great admirer of the classics. He likes to hear me read Milton, and the poets of old times. Hush! sure I hear his step—will you do me the favour to see my dear?

Olivia. With all my heart Madam, but you must excuse my returning, as I have to prepare myself for an airing in the curricle.

Miss Venusia. Oh, just as you please Miss Olivia. [*Exit Olivia.*

Miss Venusia. If, as I suspect, Sir Arthur should disclose his long smothered passion, how am I to behave? My acquirements seem to have made an impression on his friend Mr. Query too, who he tells me is one of the most inquiring geniuses of the age.—He comes.

Enter Sir Arthur.

Sir Arthur. S'death! Miss Wyndham gone! *(aside)* To interrupt Miss Venusia Delmar is an act of sacrilege to the interests of literature—how then am I to sue for forgiveness?

Miss Venusia. The interruptions of some persons are indeed intolerable, but a man like you, who has such an esteem for—

Sir Arthur. What does she mean now? I must humour her this time, however. *(aside.)* Madam.

Miss Venusia. *You* I say, Sir Arthur, never pay a female so ill a compliment, as to be attentive to so ridiculous an exterior, as *beauty*, your present ideas are derived from a *different source.*

Sir Arthur. By my honour madam you do me justice. No Miss Venusia, beauty is in my eyes, a mere chimera; give *me* the female whose mental graces can charm the imagination, and captivate the understanding, as my friend Mr. Query says.

Miss Venusia. Mr. Query makes me proud. The approbation of such a scholar as you say your friend is—

Sir Arthur. Oh! one of the first in the world, the most inquiring genius I ever met with in the whole course of my life.

Miss Venusia. He has promised me the honour of an hour's conversation this morning. Ah! Sir Arthur, how futile are all other entertainments compared with the interchange of intellect.

Sir Arthur. The union of minds.

Miss Venusia. There is no accounting for the vanity of some females you know Sir Arthur, however, I must leave you for the present.

Sir Arthur. Oh madam! why so?

Miss Venusia. I must finish my nine and thirtieth book of my poem with satirical notes.

Sir Arthur. I would not for worlds, madam, do literature such an injury as to detain you—besides I see Mr. Query coming this way, and he would interrupt us.

Miss Venusia. For the present—adieu then, Sir Arthur.

[*Sir Arthur hands her to the door in centre, she curtseys and goes off.*

Enter Query *at the wing.*

Sir Arthur. How Query! not started yet?

Query. The carriage is this moment at the door, and I only come to ask—

Sir Arthur. Zounds!—I can't stay to be asked any thing *now*—only take care that no accident—

Query. Depend on me Sir Arthur, never met with an accident in all my life, so careful that when I took lady Highflyer's little son an airing, kept steady as possible, looked at nothing but the horses heads, for twelve miles together—brought the carriage quite *safe home*—to be sure Master Highflyer was *missing*, for being cautious not to frighten him, never once perceived that the little gentleman had popped out on the other side of me. My lady in a great rage when I came back—but no harm done—Master Highflyer returned safe and sound the next morning in the basket of the Windsor coach.

Sir Arthur. A mighty careful fellow, truly so—it's lucky, now I remember, that you have not set out—my dear Query!

Query. Well.

Sir Arthur. As you say you wish to be useful to me, here is a letter to young Hardacre, you guess its contents, and shall be my friend in this affair.

Query. Yes, yes, Baronet—I do guess its contents, and I will be your friend in the affair—

but *not* by carrying the letter—plague take such officious friends—what are they *like*—why—the—the *comet* full of fire superfluous, heat unnecessary—gazed at by the curious—safest at a distance.

Sir Arthur. Very well sir—since you refuse me—I must send my letter by—

Query. Any body but Ned Query—I am a strange fellow—I have spent my life in making people laugh—it never *hurts* me—the more they laugh at me, the better I like it. I love to be useful—I'd sail to Russia—make a voyage to Abyssinia—any thing to be *useful*—but the medler who runs about to set two fellows cutting each others throats, is not only the most useless, but the most mischievous being on the face of the earth. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—HARDACRE'S *Cottage.*

Enter PHILIP *in his rustic Dress through the Cottage Door in centre.*

Philip. The day grows late—yet my father returns not: the heavy rustling of the leaves too, seem to foretel a coming storm. Well, let it rage: it can not drown the tempest here. [*strikes his heart.*] Olivia! beloved Olivia! Hush presumptuous heart! lie still. Crush these aspiring hopes, be faithful to thy promise given, and sacrifice thy happiness to hers —[*A crash heard at the door of the Cottage.*]—What noise is this?—[*A servant enters rapidly.*]—Ha! who are you?

Servant. Oh sir, make all the haste you can, a gentleman has just overturned a curricle at the door, and we fear the lady who was in it is severely hurt.

Philip. Where is the gentleman? with *his* assistance I may——

Servant. He ran off for help directly sir, bidding me say, he hoped you would give the lady the shelter of this house from the storm which is coming on.

Philip. To any human being in distress the shelter of this house was never yet refused—no words, but follow me.

[*They rush out; noise of falling rain, flashes of lightning seen through the Cottage window.* PHILIP *and servant re-enter with* OLIVIA, *who is too much agitated to take notice of what is going forwards. They seat her in a chair. Servant retires—and* PHILIP *speaks.*

Madam, may I presume. (*Catching her eye.*)—Olivia.

Olivia. Where am I? sure I should know this house, this——Philip—dear Philip.

[*Approaching him, he averts his face.*

Philip. Where will the malice of my fortune end? To see—to love—and yet be forced to shun her! Olivia! you received my letter?

Olivia. I did: and it has both alarmed and terrified me. You tell me there that we must meet *no more.* Could Philip be in earnest?

Philip. Honour, justice, humanity—all—all demand the painful sacrifice. Too long already has the baleful presence of an unhappy man clouded your prospects and destroyed your hopes—go—go enjoy the fortune heaven has blessed you with—leave me to my fate.

Olivia. Unkindly said! if *you* forget your generous acts, 'tis fit that I refresh your memory. When in our childish rambles, arm in arm we climbed yon precipice, my dizzy sight betrayed my faltering step, when Philip boldly plunged the steep and saved Olivia at the hazard of his life.

Philip. Forbear! recal not thus the scenes of happy infancy—they make life's landscape darken round me—and memory adds fresh pangs to one so lost—so wretched—and so hopeless—my conscience is as yet unsullied, let me retain that consolation, and——

Olivia. I know your heart is pure dear Philip—look up then—look proudly up while here Olivia owns her sentiments to thee and all the world—telling the sneering, idle herd of coxcombs, that flutter round her person, she prizes the friendship of one honest, honourable man, before a tribe of those unfeeling rakes, who falsely would be reckonedmen of *honour.*

Enter HARDACRE, *his pipe in his Mouth, on seeing them, starts—throws it to the ground, and advances towards them.*

Hardacre. What do I see? Is this your promise Philip?

Philip. Sir—Sir—I———

Hardacre. You have *hurt* me. The toil of the day had overpowered me—and you—you have completed it. [*wiping his brow.*

Phillip. I am innocent, sir.

Hardacre. What brings Olivia here then.

Olivia. Hear me, sir.

Philip. Place yourself in my situation, father, tell me then how you would have acted.

Hardacre. In all situations I trust old Hardacre would have acted like an honest man, you know me, Miss Wyndham, you know me. Sir David has insulted me with a suspicion that—he looks down upon the rustic—I am rough, I am plain—but he shall one day know, though the bark of the tree is rugged, and the top somewhat withered, the root is still sound, and the core as vigorous and as untainted as his own; you—you have grieved me, boy.

Philip. Then am I the most unfortunate as well as the most wretched of men.

Olivia. Hear me guardian—or if you persist in denying me that title, Hear me *friend of my father*.

Hardacre. Friend of Wyndham—well—go on—speak.

Olivia. Philip is *not to blame*—a gentleman broke down our carriage at this door—when he sheltered an unprotected female—indeed—indeed he did not *know* that female was Olivia.

Hardacre. Is it so—Philip forgive me. As your *guardian*, dear Olivia, I must now resign my right.

Olivia. Dear sir, have I offended?

Hardacre. No, bless thee, no, but I am forced to beg your absence from my house. I am thought to have designs upon your fortune—*this* I cannot submit to. The poor man's probity is all that he can call his own—and I cannot afford to part with it—it is the *harvest* of a sixty years of toil, and thanks to heaven and my country, there is no man on earth that can prevent my reaping it.

Olivia. The justice of your sentiments have pierced me to the soul. Oh Philip!

Philip. Olivia. [*Here re-enter servant.*]

Servant. Sir Arthur, madam, attends you with my Lady Delmar's chariot.

Olivia. I come—farewell my guardian—Philip adieu.

[*To Philip, who throws himself in a chair and covers his face with his hands—Olivia looks at him and rushes out. The servant stays.*

Servant. I had forgot—Sir Arthur desired me to give this letter to young Mr. Hardacre.

Philip. To *me?*

Servant. To you, sir—if you are the gentleman.

Philip. I am. [*Servant gives him the letter and exit. Philip is agitated as he reads it.*

Hardacre. The contents affect him—my son! give me that paper.

Philip. Your pardon, sir.

Hardacre. I entreat.

Philip. Excuse me, I——

Hardacre. I COMMAND.

Philip. I dare not disobey—but remember the honour of a son is in a father's hands. [*gives the letter.*

Hardacre. And where shall it be *safer*?—where shall the ivy find more firm support than clasping the rough trunk where first it grew? How's this!—a challenge—oppression on oppression!—well boy!—how do you mean to act?

Philip. I am a soldier, and your son—do *you* decide.

Hardacre. 'Tis hard—but yet—yes—you *shall meet* him, Philip. [*He reads the note.*

" Since Sir David's commands have no effect—answer me—though the difference of our ranks makes it a condescension,"——what!—" to put you on a level"—indeed!

Philip. Does he insult our poverty?

Hardacre. *No. He insults his country!* Whoever breaks the peaceful order of society has *no* rank *in* it, he has *forfeited his claim*; come, come, my Philip—thou art the only prop of my declining day—when in distant climes my other blossom, thy poor sister, perished—when she was lost to me for ever—thou yet remaindst to comfort me—and now—now—[*Grasps his hand and bursts into tears; after a struggle Philip kneels to him.*

Philip. Father! If you would *have* me shun this fatal meeting teach me but how I can with honour—a soldier's honour.

Hardacre. [*firmly raises then embraces him.*] No! no! That must not be: yet something shall be done. For fourteen years I've shunned Sir David Delmar—this day I'll see him and all mystery shall end—my selfish feelings shall be sacrificed. Philip, thy hand—woe to the wretch who seeks these bloody trials—a professed duellist is a *mildew* and a *blight* upon the fairest works of heaven—he is a savage bird of prey, and like kites and vultures should be hunted by general consent from that harvest which he was only born to ruin and deface—come, come, my son.

[*Exeunt with firm resolution.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—Sir David's *Study*.

Sir David *and* Record—Record *has his Book of Accounts.*

Sir David.

Again tormented! and am I never to be free from these devouring cormorants?—Is this your vigilance?

Record. You know how often I have told you that it must come to this at last.

Sir David. Well, Mr. Record—it's very, very well, sir.

Record. I can no longer answer the many demands that every hour press in—I have done all I could—and must now beg you to examine my accounts, and take my resignation.

Sir David. 'Tis well, 'tis very well, Mr. Record—you see me in the toils of misery, and take that opportunity to insult, and to desert me.

Record. Insult! Desert you.—Sir David Delmar, when I do a kind act, I do not wish to talk about it. I have served your family these five and thirty years—I have during that time saved up *one thousand pounds*—I have this very morning disbursed the last remaining guinea of it among your creditors—if this is either to insult or to desert you, I ask your pardon—Desert you in your need!

Sir David. Then *quit* me not.

Record. Yes—as your Steward this very day. In

In poverty I would serve you, with all my heart, and all my strength—but pardon me when I respectfully repeat that I will never contribute to the flattering luxury, that *ruins* while it smiles upon you. [*Bows and retires.*

Sir David. My hopes are past—my friends desert—my heart upbraids me! Blandford stedfastly refuses the marriage with Olivia, and all my hopes now rest upon Sir Arthur. Still while Miss Wyndham remains in my house, my ruin may be prevented; her fortune may amuse my creditors a while—s'death! what a state is mine! obligation *on* obligation!

Enter MISS WYNDHAM.

Olivia. I come, Sir David, before I set out, to return my grateful thanks for the many civilities I have received, both from yourself and Lady Delmar.

Sir David. Set out!—Miss Wyndham!--are—are you then going to *leave* us?

Olivia. I informed you sir, last week, that I had a visit to pay to—

Sir David. To Philip Hardacre, perhaps. [*Bitterly.*

Olivia. Sir.

Sir David. Your father, madam, thought proper to make me an associate with this Mr.—Mr. Hardacre—a name I never thought to have seen conjoined with mine even in a *writing.*

Olivia. Mr. Hardacre, sir, was my late *father's friend*, and he has acted towards *me* with a noble integrity that must ever claim my gratitude.

Sir David. Her words upbraid me!—[*Aside.*]—Miss Wyndham, I have a request to make.

Olivia. Sir, if in my power— [*Hesitating.*

Sir David. It *is*; a few days cannot possibly in-

commode your plans: grant me the favour of remaining *one week* more with Lady Delmar.

Olivia. I will deal candidly with you sir; young and *thoughtless* as I may *appear* I have long observed you struggling with pecuniary difficulties—nay, be not angry—hear me with patience. When at age my fortune will be at my *own disposal;* and if that fortune can be the means of restoring the lost comforts of an amiable woman, or a misguided man, I shall think it has wandered to *me* as a providential gift from heaven, and hail it as the smiling herald of the purest earthly happiness.

Sir David. You have touched, affected me. Of this hereafter: you consent then to remain one week?

Olivia. If that will contribute to your peace, I do.

Sir David. It will most seriously; two things more; not a word of your suspicions to my Lady—let me next hope that you will think no farther of this Philip—*this*—

Olivia. On *that* subject I must entreat you to *excuse* me.

Sir David. By your father's will, *my* consent is requisite to your marriage; and though this artful rustic, under the specious semblance of blunt honesty——

Olivia. Again—again you allow your *reason* to be blinded by your *prejudice;* permit me to retire. *Reflect*, dear sir, on that which I have said: and think me not *intrusive* when I add, that in keeping your embarrassments a secret from Lady Delmar, you wrong yourself and her. Believe me, when I assure you, that she who has shared the *splendour* of your fortunes, will esteem it an ill compliment, to be held incapable of supporting

your trials of adversity, or of partaking the sorrows of your bosom. [*Exit Olivia.*

Sir David. Again, again perplexed, defeated, and confounded. 'Tis plain she loves this Philip, then! she owned it not, 'tis true, but she did not *deny* it—my affairs draw to a crisis—all doubts must end this night. Ha, Zelidy!

ZELIDY *enters.*

Zelidy. Your pardon, if I intrude, but—

Sir David. Another bar to all my projects but for her Blandford might have entered into my schemes. [*Aside.*

Zelidy. I thought Captain Blandford had been here, sir, he has something to communicate that—

Sir David. 'Tis plain—'tis plain, and every hope is wrecked—yet do not think, rash girl—what am I about to say, my feelings all grow *callous*, and I have reached the last step of the ladder of oppression, by outraging the sensibilities of an orphan and a woman. [*Aside.*

Enter BLANDFORD.

Bland. Sir—you look disturbed—you tremble—can I do any thing to aid, assist, or——

Sir David. You once might have done so George, but *now* it is *too late.* (*wildly*)

Zelidy. Oh, heavens!

Sir David. *Excuse me* George! something has happened, which has ruffled my disposition—let me see you in the course of an hour, when I shall have something to communicate of the greatest consequence. Now then the die is cast—*irrevocably.* [*Aside and Exit.*

Zelidy. What can he mean? he alarms—he terrifies me.

Blandford. Fear not, dear Zelidy, you shall never want a protector.

Zelidy. Why did you bring me from the cottage of poor Ellen? there infancy was past in placid, gentle joys.

Blandford. That Ellen was my mother's *trusted friend.* Exposed to a dangerous profession, my uncle was the only living being to whom, before my last voyage, I could entrust you. This night all shall be explained.

Zelidy. But—

Blandford. Nay, Zelidy, I pledge my word—my uncle's looks alarm me—watch him, I conjure you, and should any thing occur, speak to my friend Query, and he will immediately bring you to me, at the cottage of old Hardacre: the servants will direct you—leave me now, dear Zelidy, as I expect Sir Arthur every moment upon business of importance.

Zelidy. I will not then *detain* you—adieu my benefactor—wherever you may go, may heaven protect and bless you. [*affectionately kisses his hand and exit.*

Blandford. Now then for the Baronet. The letter to the Colonel then was his. Record I fear is right in his suspicions. At all events this brave young soldier shall not meet him—no—though I run the risk myself: an aged parent depends on Philip's assistance: but I—what am *I?* nobody cares for me—nobody? yes, poor Zelidy, she esteems and lovss me—and I love her, and—Love! what have I to do with Love? I have forsworn it—if Zelidy was to marry *another* would it concern *me?*—not a whit—I would go to sea again and hope—that the first bullet might—Zounds! this looks plaguy *like* Love too—Psha! I'll have nothing *to do* with it—it's a dangerous enemy, and there's honor in conquering it—so I'll see Sir Arthur—Set poor old

Hardacre's heart at rest--and then, and then haste back to Zelidy as fast as my heels will carry me—love !—nonsense ! [*Exit.*

SCENE, Hardacre's *Cottage.*

Hardacre, Record—Record *with writings and a casket in his hand.*

Hardacre. Thus, Mr. Record, have I fully told you all my purposes.

Record. I trust you never will repent your confidence.

Hardacre. For that, old honesty, I will be *sworn.* Sir David and I at *last* must meet. You have examined those papers and the casket I intrusted to your care —You are a man of *business*, and can inform me whether the are correct.

Record. Nothing can be more so I shall see the casket, and return your papers, wishing you a prosperous issue to your hopes.

Hardacre. That must be left to time, the Husbandman may *sow the grain*, but 'tis not allotted to *man* to answer for its *growth.*

Record. At my request Captain Blandford wrote to Philip's Colonel—he has received an answer with the slanderous note enclosed—I know the hand—I'll swear it is Sir Arthur's—it insinuates that Philip had spoken disrespectfully of his Colonel.

Hardacre. And this Sir Arthur Tessel, did at Sir David's suggestion—

Record. Even so—the young gentleman's attachment to the sister was all a feint—Olivia was his *aim*—to gain her he would have comply'd with any request her guardian could have made—but Blandford has thus put the black scrawl into my hands—I place it in *yours*—take it—and may it confound its author.

Hardacre. It shall—be sure of that—shame on such cowardly practices. " The plunderer that " robs my farm, pleads want as his excuse—but " the midnight incendiary that wantonly fires my " corn-field in the dark, has all the guilt of the thief " to create my contempt, without the *pretence* of " temptation to justify my compassion. By Bland- " ford's opinion we will stand or fall—he is a noble " fellow, and will come, you say."

Record. I expect him every moment—oh I had forgot to *tell* you—I have left Sir David.

Hardacre. Will you share my purse?

Record. Excuse me, I am an oddity as well as *yourself.*

Hardacre. I know you are.

Record. When you barely do an act of justice would you choose to be paid for it?

Hardacre. No.

Record. No more do I; judge of your neighbour by yourself—a knock—it is the captain—Farewell, for a time. [*Exit Record.*

Hardacre. Now let any one dare to say, that there is no *Friendship*, no *Honesty* in this world—I answer it is *false*, there is abundance to be found for those who choose to seek for them, " a few tares " will start up in the finest soil, but none but a fool " would burn a whole field because a weed or two " has grown among the *crop.*"

Enter BLANDFORD.

Your servant, sir, will you be seated?

Blandford. Nay, nay, honest Farmer—no ceremony, that is out of the line of either of us; at my old friend Record's request I have written to Colonel Tessel. I have likewise seen Sir Arthur and shewn him his uncle's letter. I told him all I thought upon the subject, confounded, shamed, convinced, and am proud to be the bearer of his ample apology to you, and to your son.

Hardacre. And how is Philip now to act?

Blandford. As I would do, accept the offered hand of his enemy, and feel prouder of having convinced one man by the rational appeal of mercy, than to have punished an hundred by the argument of brutal violence.

Hardacre. Sir, your voice decides it: you interest me much, one doubt alone—excuse me— but Miss Wyndham informs me you have for many years had a young lady under your protection.

Blandford. Hold, my good friend, this is a point on which I have refused to answer the interrogatories of my dearest relatives—they have indulged my humor, and a *stranger* will surely do me the same favour.

Hardacre. I was wrong, and ask your pardon—we all have secrets.—Captain Blandford I shall soon leave this country—should your fortunes not chance to be equal to your merits—I am a plain man—but write to Mr. Osborne, at St. Domingo, and you shall never want a friend.

Blandford. [*starting*] At *St. Domingo*, did you say—Excuse me, sir—but you interest me deeply, and the young person you have just named, may have cause to *bless* you.

Hardacre. Her blessing would console me. I have known happier days. I will hide nothing from *you.* In an insurrection of our Colony I was summoned some miles off in order to defend our property—my son was young, but he marched chearily by my side—my wife, the best that ever blessed the hope of man—had died about that time—excuse—excuse me— [*weeps.*]

Blandford. Proceed I *conjure* you.

Hardacre. On our return all was a scene of terror—the insurrection had raged in our absence—my faithful servants had *all* fallen in the defence of

my lands—and my poor child—was—was heard no more of—she—she—Oh heart! [*In anguish.*

Blandford. Take comfort, sir—she *lives.*

Hardacre. Lives! lives! it cannot—Oh yes! yes! yes! you are too good to mock me.

Blandford. Nay, be firm, and listen.

Hardacre. I will endeavour, sir, to—Lives! Oh mercy!

Blandford. About fourteen years since —

Hardacre. [*Clasping his hands.*] The time, the *very* time!

Blandford. The ship in which I served was stationed for awhile at St. Domingo. One night we saw the town in flames, and heard the shrieks of violence and murder—we ordered out the boat—our men were few—but they were Englishmen.

Hardacre. Still—still—my girl—my child.

Blandford. We gained the land, and found a large plantation blazing—then a scene of carnage I *shudder* to remember—a desperate savage ran with an infant shrieking in his arms—her cries struck on my ear—I flew like lightning, with one hand snatched the baby from his grasp, and with the other felled him to the ground.

Hardacre. Oh!—oh! — [*Grasping his hand and choaked with his emotions.*]

Blandford. I bore her to the ship, which was next morning to set sail for England, the insurrection raged—nor could I trust my little charge on shore—I was a stranger there.

Hardacre. You brought her home?

Blandford. I did, and tried in vain all means to find her friends—no one in St. Domingo answered my enquiry.

Hardacre. Alas! it must be so. Thinking her dead, I changed my name, and came, unknown to every one, to this my native land—Wyndham, my

only living friend, was privy to the secret—he died and kept it—the infant you have reared with so much care is mine—I have so long been near her then, yet my old heart never once whispered——

ZELIDY *speaks without.*

Zelidy. I must see Captain Blandford.—[*She enters.*]—Oh hasten to Sir David's—all there is a scene of terror, I flew to tell you, my dear—dear protector, that—[HARDACRE *here gazes on her.*]—why does this gentleman so earnestly regard me?

Blandford. Now—now, sir, summon all the fortitude—all the resolution of a *man.*

Hardacre. How mean you that—young lady!—Blandford! tell me—is it?—[BLANDFORD *affirms.*]—I cannot be deceived—fly to these weak old arms my long lost—darling child.

Zelidy. Child did he say? Oh yes! I feel—I know him—I remember him—Father! Oh Father!—

[*Rushes to embrace him.*

Hardacre. Mr. Blandford—Sir—Thanks, blessings——

[*Tries to speak—sinks down embracing the knee of* BLANDFORD—ZELIDY *kneels on the other side of her Protector*—and the Act ends.

ACT V.

SCENE I. OLIVIA's *Chamber in* SIR DAVID's *House.*

A Lute and Music on the Table.

OLIVIA, *seated in a pensive Posture.*

Olivia.

I Cannot read, I cannot play; music has lost its magic influence: why was I born an heiress? what have I gained by fortune? the confession of Sir Arthur, ere he left this house, too clearly proves, that it is only destined to expose me to the mercenary designs of mercenary men: world, world!! I'm weary of thee. How do I regret the simple cottage of my rural guardian! when it was thought no harm of me to think of Philip; to sing to him his favourite ballad—*ha! (takes up a song)* here it is—yes, I will try if yet I can remember it.

[*Sings an artless ballad.—Philip enters in his uniform, towards the conclusion.*]

SONG.

Little Cupid, one day, o'er a myrtle bough stray'd,
Among the sweet blossoms he wantonly play'd,
Plucking many a thorn, 'mid the buds of the tree,
He felt that his finger was stung by a bee.
Little Cupid then whimpered; he sobb'd and he sigh'd,
Then ran to his mother, and pettishly cry'd,
"Ah Venus! dear Mother! I'm wounded, you see,
And I ask for *revenge* on the mischievous bee."
His mother then laughed at the story he told,
O'er his forehead of snow strok'd his ringlets of gold,

"Now, when you wound another, my Lad," answered she,
"Ere your arrows are pointed, you'll think on the bee;
A lesson of love let the story impart,
Ere the beam of the eye light the flame of the heart.
Ye fair ones, remember, while yet ye are free,
That the rose holds the thorn, but the myrtle the bee."

Philip. Olivia.

Olivia. Heavens, you here! how you have frightened me! and does your father—

Philip. Be not alarmed; I wait on you by his *command*, to inform you, that in few hours an execution will be in this house, and to remove you to his own, should you think proper.

Olivia. And is my guardian still so kind, then?

Philip. Under these circumstances, he holds it an imperious act of duty. You wonder at my present appearance: know then, dear Olivia, Sir Arthur Tessel, at the instigation of Sir David, sent me that sort of appeal, no man of honour can refuse.

Olivia. At the instigation of Sir David? unhappy man!

Philip. Even so, my opponent affected to *doubt* whether he could meet me upon equal terms; I therefore resumed this garb, to set his mind at rest upon that subject, since whoever appears as a *soldier*, *must* appear as a *gentleman*.

Olivia. Oh, heavens! and *have* you met?

Philip. We have, when instead of a pistol he tendered an apology; gave me a letter for Sir David, another for his sister-in-law, and then immediately set out for London.

Olivia. And your father?

Philip. Of him I have much to tell you. I must now fulfil my commissions, if you will then leave this house—

Olivia. Not till I have first rendered every assistance to poor Lady Delmar. Whatever her

husband's errors may have been, *her* misfortunes are *unmerited.* She shall share my home—for of what value can fortune be to me, except when it offers these golden opportunities of comforting the wretched. [*Exeunt.*

Enter MISS VENUSIA, *opposite side to which they exit.*

Miss Venusia. It must be so, Sir Arthur will soon come to the critical question. Yes, Miss Olivia shall soon perceive that the spear of Minerva may sometimes inflict as deep a wound, as the arrows of Cupid.

Enter Maid.

Maid. Mr. Query, Madam.

Miss Venusia. Bless me, the great scholar—I must put on my best appearance—a man of his critical sagacity will give a piercing glance, even at first sight—Dorothea; reach me down the Pursuits of Literature—So, now you may go. [*She shews in Query.*

Query. Sir Arthur was right—she does regard me with an eye of favour *(aside.)* Happy at this opportunity of being introduced to a Lady of whom the world talks so highly.

Miss Venusia. Such elegant praises from a man of your celebrity must be ever flattering—the little I have done to oblige the world, the opinion of such a judge must amply overpay.

Query. Oblige the world? judge? what does that mean? [*aside.*] Pray ma'am is there any thing new? any thing stirring?

Miss Venusia. No, sir, a mere dearth in the literary hemisphere; few people now a days are of your inquisitive turn of mind.

Query. Inquisitive! oh, she's found me out, Blandford has betrayed me, and I shall never be abe to make myself *useful* here.—I *see* that. [*aside.*

Miss Venusia. You are silent, sir; most of our modern wise men are so: they say but little, but they think more. Happy would it be for the world, if all like us spoke in their *works* alone.

Query. Works? yes, madam, yes. I am a great admirer of works; pray, what may your's be?

Miss Venusia. Oh! mere private ones, I assure you, but my motives are the best; and the *end* is for posterity.

Query. Indeed, madam, and if I may be so bold; what may be your *favourite* work?

Miss Venusia. The Pleasures of Imagination.

Query. Really! an odd amusement for a lady at her time of life. (*aside.*)

Miss Venusia. Though I dare say, you prefer the *Pleasures of Hope?*

Query. A broad hint that, I see I am a favourite. (*aside.*)

Miss Venusia. You must indulge me by consulting your taste; pray then do you give the preference to the Rise and Progress, or to the Decline and Fall?

Query. (*bowing*) To the Decline and Fall, by all means, madam, out of compliment to *you.*

Miss Venusia. I am happy to find that we *amalgamate* so well, your *enquiries* must have been unceasing.

Query. Some of my friends tell me a little *too* much so, madam.

Miss Venusia. Ignorant souls! no man *can* enquire too much.

Query. A sensible woman!

Miss Venusia. You have the Pursuits no doubt?

Query. Never without them. She and I *have* changed characters I think, she's plaguy inquisitive. (*aside*).

Miss Venusia. Any thing you admire, must be

excellent; and when you come to London, I hope you will make one of my celebrated society. I assure you I have people of the highest eminence at my club, we have the most delightful entertainment, the very first characters in the land, Lords, Doctors, Generals, and Reviewers.

Query. The reviewing Generals, you mean perhaps, madam?

Miss Venusia. Exactly so: opinions are discussed, merits adjudged, and many who little suspect it, find their *bad works* most curiously *carved*, I promise you.

Query. Carved!

Miss Venusia. Cut up root and branch.

Query. And if they cut up bad works, I suppose they are equally ready to encourage good ones; and if any bad works spread abroad likely to do injury to man, woman, or child, your reviewing generals have my free consent to cut and lop away while they can hold a weapon in their hands; *such* works are as *gangrenes* on the bodies of good taste and good sense, and none but fools or knaves can complain of the operation.

Enter PHILIP.

Philip. I beg pardon, madam, but Sir Arthur Tessel requested me to deliver this letter into your hands alone. (*gives a letter.*)

Miss Venusia. Alone, sir!

Philip. Alone, Madam; I have executed my commission, and now respectfully take leave.

[*Exit.*

Miss Venusia. A very extraordinary youth, well looking, and retiring! and possesses the ancient quality of modesty—a rare gem which has been lost among many *other valuable antiquities* for several *centuries* past. But now for my letter—it must

be the *declaration*—a truly classical hand—the characters bear a strong similitude to the Grecian.

Query. Oh, yes, Madam, its quite the thing, the writing of most ladies and gentlemen in modern days, is very like the Greek—Perhaps you mayn't have your spectacles about you, Madam—pray allow *me* to decypher—always proud to be *useful*.

[*reads*.

" *Madam*,

" Ere this letter arrives, I shall have quitted this " house, and shall most probably never see you " more.

Miss Venusia. What! [*Query reading*.

" From motives of the worst nature, I have long " been both trifling with, and imposing on you. " The only reparation I can make, is to fly a spot, " where every thing reproaches—the guilty but " penitent Arthur Tessel."

Miss Venusia. The base man! but I will rise superior to my fall! I will expose him—I will publish my life—and you, *learned* sir—you shall be my biographer.

Query. Why, look ye, madam, to serve and please has ever been the business of my life, and if my exertions sometimes happen to fall short of my intentions, I argue thus—what was my motive? good nature—my fear? censure—who wishes success? Every body—who can commend it? nobody—what was my plea? necessity—my excuse? friendship—I promise to do my best—no man on earth can promise more, so madam, have with you. [*hands her in*.

SCENE II.—*The general room which must have a folding door in its centre.*

Lady DELMAR *and* WILLIAMS.

Lady Delmar. What do you tell me? a chaise ordered? hurry and confusion in his looks?

Williams. Too true, indeed, Madam—my master desired me to order the horses to be put to *immediately.*

Lady Delmar. Fly to him instantly, I entreat you: tell him I entreat, I supplicate a moment's audience. (*Exit Williams*) No, generous Olivia!—I am grateful for your noble offer, but a commanding duty now requires my presence here.

Enter SIR DAVID.

Sir David. Emily!

Lady Delmar. My love!

Sir David. I have not deserved that name—Oh Emily! victim of false pride, I have ruined thee, and all thy flattering train of smiling hopes. The sister I deserted is avenged! Her husband now may triumph, but that's my least of pangs; for thee, for thee I feel!

" *Lady Delmar.* For me! my husband, rouse, exert your energies—speak comfort to your heart."

" *Sir David.* Where shall I hope to find it? Driven from my native land, a prey to folly, shame, remorse, and guilt—where shall I fly for refuge?"

" *Lady Delmar.* To *these arms.*"

" *Sir David.* Such blessings I deserve not—
" No, no, my wife—the generous Olivia has con-
" sented to receive, to cherish you—with her forget
" my follies, and my sorrows."

" *Lady Delmar.* Hear me, my husband! when
" we wedded first, joy strewed our path with

" flowers. My happiness—my pleasures were
" your cares—you could not see your wife outshone
" by others of her sex—for her you struggled, and
" for her you fell—you knew me not—now put me
" to the proof—go where you will—I'll never,
" never quit you—I will divide your sorrows, chace
" your cares, wipe off the upbraiding tear of an-
" guish from your cheek, and be, what every faith-
" ful wife has sworn to prove—your servant, guide,
" your counsellor, and friend." [*embracing him.*

" *Sir David. Friend of my bosom*—Hide thee
" ever there, prepare thee then, an hour will bring
" the carriage that bears me off from England, and
" a prison—what will become of thee—remain,
" my Emily—I cannot bear the thought—in
" foreign lands, a fugitive—a wanderer."*

Lady Delmar. No earthly power can change my resolution—doubt not my fortitude or faith. Enriched by a husband's affection, what woman can be *poor?* possessed of a husband's heart, what wife can want a *home?* [*Exit Lady Delmar.*

Sir David. How have I trifled with each blessing life afforded. Still, still, the carriage comes not—it must be near the hour—hark! I hear it.

Enter WILLIAMS.

Williams. The chariot, sir.

Sir David. 'Tis well, acquaint your lady, and say I earnestly entreat her utmost speed. [*Exit Williams.* Ha! who comes here? Some creditor—unlucky! now.

Enter HARDACRE.

Friend your pleasure?

Hardacre. Excuse me, sir, I have taken the liberty of arresting the horses at the door, while I say a *few words* to you.

Sir David. Arrest my horses. The measure was a

* The lines marked with inverted commas, are omitted in the representation.

strong one, but I presume, you knew your *power*, and have thought proper to exert it.

Hardacre. My *power!*

Sir David. There are doubtless some accounts between us, you wish immediately to be settled—I confess—I confess my inability—so use your pleasure.

Hardacre. Yes, Sir David Delmar, there *are* some accounts between us, which *must* immediately be *settled*.

Sir David. I have told you, sir, it is out of my *power*.

Hardacre. Excuse me, give me a patient hearing, and you will find that it is in your *power*, if it is in your *inclination*, to strike the balance of every difference between us.

Sir David. Speed, sir, is necessary, pray be seated.

[*They sit.*

Hardacre. As I am but a bad orator, I shall merely state a *plain story*.

Sir David. Well, sir.

Hardacre. Many years ago, a man of consequence, in this part of the world, left his eldest son with a *title;* an *encumbered* estate; and an *only sister* to protect.

Sir David. Proceed.

Hardacre. The young man being then absent on his travels, the sister formed an attachment to a neighbouring yeoman's son. He had saved her from the fury of an intoxicated ruffian. Gratitude struck root in her heart, blossomed, and the fruit was *love;* the brother's *pride*, on his return was wounded, he abandoned the newly married couple, and never would admit them to his presence.

Sir David. He acted rightly—tho' you may despise rank.

Hardacre. You wrong me—I respect it—I consider the nobility of my country as the lordly trees of the forest, engrafted there to shelter all the humbler shrubs around them. But to my tale—abandoned by their brother, they sought a foreign land, where two young cherubs crowned their happiness—the climate carried off the wife, who dying in her husband's arms, implored upon her brother's head—

Sir David. What? her maledictions? [*Shuddering.*

Hardacre. Oh no, no, her *blessing* and *forgiveness.*

Sir David. Oh memory—Oh poor Cecilia. [*Aside.*

Hardacre. The husband mourned her virtues o'er her grave—His daughter's loss ensued—with wealth immense, converted into *jewels*, he returned to England, to sow the seeds of virtue in the mind of his *remaining* child—he bred him in adversity's rude school, a school that learns him *to feel for others*, a lesson of more value than all that pampered luxury can teach the dissipated sons of idleness and folly.

Sir David. Your words *upbraid* me sir.

Hardacre. Nay, *mark the end.* Much has my boy endured the treasure of an honest name traduced, his father scorned and hated, [though *unknown*] by him he wished to serve and love; oppression on oppression, slander *upon* slander, roused his resentment for *awhile*, but, when he saw the aggressor beat to the ground like a fallen tree—he sought his dwelling—resolved to make his story known, and *gratify* the *only* vengeance an *honest* mind can harbour, the severe revenge of—*doing good for evil!*

Sir David. Osborne!

Osborne. Osborne! the Farmer Osborne, in Record's hands placed sums, which have retrieved

your debts—discharged your creditors—restored you to your rights, and now Sir David, the *balance* is struck—and our accounts are settled.

While this speech is going on, Lady Delmar and Olivia advance through the centre door.

Sir David. My benefactor! Oh my wife—thank, thank your *preserver*. [*Philip enters.*

Hardacre. Madam, his friend—I wish no other title. Philip my boy! we need but *little*, what remains of my wealth, shall be the grateful, but inadequate reward of him who saved my darling dear Cecilia.

Sir David. For Philip's virtue, one recompense remains Olivia—you understand me, and are above all narrow vanity.

Philip. If, dear Olivia—

Lady Delmar. Nay, no denial. [*joins their hands.*

Osborne. Bless ye both.

Enter Blandford.

Phillip. Behold the man to whom we owe our happiness.

Osborne. How—How shall we *reward* him?

Blandford. The reward is easy sir—It may seem a little odd uncle—but I have lately found reason for altering some of my opinions.

Sir David. I guess'd as much.

Blandford. I once held the marriage state incompatible with the duties of my profession. I am now convinced to the contrary; the dearer the objects for whom we contend, the more ardent our exertions—nothing can be *so* dear to a man, as the wife of his heart, and the armies and navies which are filled with husbands and with parents, form the surest and most effective bulwarks of a country. Zelidy! you once called me *father*—I must now

resign *that title*, but there still remains another which—

Osborne. Which her heart confirms, I have it from her own lips—there—(*gives her to Blandford*). Thus prosperous in the happiness of those dearest to my heart, the occupations of my farm again require my presence.

Zelidy. Nay, dear father!

Olivia. You shall not leave us.

Osborne. Oh bless you—bless you girls—you shall see enough of me I warrant you. (*taking one in each hand.*) The old man shall pay his annual visit, and as he waters the little shrubbery growing up around him with the tears of fond affection—pray that they may grow with all the virtues of their mothers, and all the vigorous bravery of their fathers. The harvest of my toil at last is ripe, but I can never hope to gather it, unless our friends will *lend their hands and help to bring it in.*

END OF THE COMEDY.

EPILOGUE TO TIME'S A TELL-TALE.

Written by C. LAMB, Esq.

BOUND for the port of matrimonial bliss,
Ere I hoist sail, I hold it not amiss,
(Since prosp'rous ends ask prudent introductions)
To take a slight peep at my written instructions.
There's nothing like determining in time
All questions marital or maritime.

In all seas, straits, gulphs, ports, havens, lands, creeks.
Oh! Here it begins.
" Season, spring, wind standing at point Desire—
" The good ship Matrimony—Commander. Blandford, Esq.

Art. I.
" The captain that has the command of her,
" Or in his absence, the acting officer,
" To see her planks are sound, her timbers tight."—
That acting officer I don't relish quite,
No, as I hope to tack another verse on,
I'll do those duties in my proper person.

Art. II.
" All mutinies to be suppress'd at first."
That' a good caution to prevent the worst.

Art. III.
" That she be properly victual'd, mann'd and stor'd,
" To see no foreigners are got aboard."
That's rather difficult—do what we can—
A vessel sometimes may mistake her man.
The safest way in such a parlous doubt,
Is steady watch and keep a sharp look out.

Art. IV.
" Whereas their Lords Commissioners (the church)
" Do strictly authorise the right of search:
" As always practis'd—you're to understand
" By these what articles are contraband;
" Guns, mortars, pistols, halberts, swords, pikes, lances,
" Ball, powder, shot, and the appurtenances.
" Videlicet—whatever can be sent
" To give the enemy encouragement.
" Ogles are small shot (so the instruction runs)
" Touches hand grenades, and squeezes rifle guns."

EPILOGUE.

Art. V.
"That no free-bottom'd neutral waiting maid
"Presume to exercise the carrying trade:
"The prohibition here contained extends
"To all commerce cover'd by the name of Friends."
"Heaven speed the good ship well"—and so it ends.
Oh with such wholesome jealousies as these
May Albion cherish his old spouse the seas,
Keep over her a husband's firm command,
Not with too rigid nor too lax a hand.
Be gently patient to her swells and throws
When big with safeties to himself she goes;
Nor while she clips him in a fast embrace,
Stand for some female frowns upon her face,
But tell the rival world—and tell in Thunder,
Whom Nature joined, none ere shall put asunder.

H. Bryer, Printer, Bridge-Street, Blackfriars.

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